APPENDIX F - GED® ESSAY SCORING

Guidelines for Holistic Scoring

1. **Read and score**. Read for an overall impression of the essay. Record your score immediately. Avoid the temptation to reread the essay to justify your score in terms of specific errors.

2. **Red pens down**. Holistic readers do not make marks on essays they score. There are two major reasons for this. First, there is no time to mark papers in this fashion. Each paper should be scored within a minute or two. Secondly, marking errors directs too much attention to one trait, while allowing the reader to ignore other positive features.

3. **Do not change your score**. Avoid second-guessing yourself. Make changes only if you made a recording error.

4. **When in doubt, refer to the scoring guide criteria**. Do not compare an essay to another essay or order essays in terms of quality. Instead refer to the scale and your internalized concept of the score points.

5. **Be aware that there can be a range of essays within a score point**. (i.e., all 2s are not created equal). There are "high", "medium", and "low", essays within each score point.

6. **Avoid the tendency to adjust the number of 1s, 2s, 3s and 4s in a given set of essays**. You may have an entire packet of 2s or 3s.

7. **Be aware of and avoid potential biasing factors**. (See Reader Objectivity issues).

8. **Score only what is on the paper**. Avoid making assumptions about the writer's potential, why the writer omitted an idea, intended bridges between concepts, etc.

9. **This is only a 45 minute test**. Remember, candidates had only 45 minutes to read the prompt, to write a first draft, and to write the final draft. Do not compare the finished product with assignments that allow test-takers more time to prepare.

The GED Essay Scoring Guide

	1	2	3	4
	Inadequate	*Marginal*	*Adequate*	*Effective*
	Reader had difficulty or following the writer's ideas.	**Reader occasionally had difficulty the writer's ideas**	**Reader understands writer's ideas.**	**Reader understands and easily follows the writer's expression of ideas**
Response to the Prompt	Attempts to address prompt but with little or no success in establishing a focus	Addresses the prompt, though the focus may shift	Uses the writing prompt to establish a main idea.	Presents a clearly focused main idea that addresses the prompt.
Organization	Fails to organize ideas.	Shows some evidence of an organizational plan.	Uses an identifiable organizational plan.	Establishes a clear and logical organization.
Development and Details	Demonstrates little or no development; usually lacks details or examples or presents irrelevant information	Has some development but lacks specific details; may be limited to a listing, repetitions, or generalizations.	Has focused but occasionally uneven development; incorporates some specific detail.	Achieves coherent development with specific and relevant details and examples.
Conventions of EAE	Exhibits minimal or no control of sentence structure and the conventions of EAE	Demonstrates inconsistent control of sentence structure and the conventions of EAE.	Generally controls sentence structure and conventions of EAE.	Consistently controls sentence structure and the conventions of Edited American English (EAE)
Word Choice	Exhibits weak and/or inappropriate words.	Exhibits a narrow range of word choice, often including inappropriate selections	Exhibits appropriate word choices.	Exhibits varied and precise word choice.